

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BANGKO 20065 090955Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 AID-05 /082 W

-----026948 091237Z /43

R 090932Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6008

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 20065

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, TH

SUBJECT: THE 19TH DEFENDANT

REF: BANGKOK 19621

1. IN ADDITION TO THE "THAMMASAT 18" WHO ARE BEING TRIED IN CONNECTION WITH THE EVENTS OF LAST OCTOBER 6, THERE IS A 19TH ACTIVIST WHO IS CURRENTLY ON TRIAL BEFORE THE BANGKOK CRIMINAL COURT ON CHARGES OF LESE MAJESTE, STEMMING FROM HIS ALLEGED PARTICIPATION IN A MOCK HANGIN EPISODE REGARDED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS AIMED AT THE THAI CROWN PRINCE. THE INCIDENT OCCURRED OCTOBER 4, 1976.

2. BUNCHAT SATHIANTHAM, 18, WAS FORMALLY ARRAIGNED ON MARCH 22, 1977, ON CHARGES OF LESE MAJESTE. THE TRIAL WHICH WAS INITIALLY POSTPONED FOR TWO MONTHS DUE TO SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES, IS STILL IN PROGRESS. UPCOMING TRIAL SESSIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR SEPT. 12 AND 26. THE DEFENDANT, BUNCHAT, REMAINS IN THE CUSTODY OF THAI AUTHORITIES. HE IS REPRESENTED BY A DEFENSE LAWYER AND, UNDER CRIMINAL COURT PROCEDURES, RETAINS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL A GUILTY VERDICT.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BANGKO 20065 090955Z

3. THE CENTRAL ISSUES IN THE CASE ARE (1) THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE MOCK HANGING WAS INTENDED TO BE AN ACT OF LESE MAJESTE OR WHETHER THE CHARADE WAS SIMPLY DESIGNED TO REGISTER A PROTEST AGAINST THE GARROTING OF TWO ACTIVISTS IN NAKON PATHOM THE PREVIOUS WEEK, AND (2) THE EXTENT OF BUNCHAT'S PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE INCIDENT. SHOULD THE COURT FIND THAT

THE MOCK HANGING WAS NOT AN ACT OF LESE MAJESTE, IT  
COULD AFFECT SIMILAR CHARGES CURRENTLY PENDING AGAINST  
SIX OF THE "THAMMASAT 18" (REFTEL).

4. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE RECENT PUBLICITY SURROUNDING  
THE BUNCHAT CASE SINCE THE MAY 30 TRIAL SESSION WHEN  
FORMER PRIME MINISTER SINI PRAMOT WAS CALLED  
TO DESCRIBE OFFICIAL REPORTS RECEIVED BY HIS OFFICE  
ON THE INCIDENT. SENI REPORTEDLY EXPLAINED THAT HE  
HAD RECEIVED POLICE REPORTS OF THE MOCK HANGING BUT  
HAD NOT PERSONALLY VIEWED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE  
PARTICIPANTS. THE EX-PM'S TESTIMONY WAS LOW-KEYED AND  
IMPARTIAL, BUT NOT ESPECIALLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE  
PROSECUTION. IT IS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT HOW LONG THE  
TRIAL WILL LAST OR WHAT THE OUTCOME IS LIKELY TO BE.

COMMENT: THE BASIS FOR TRYING BUNCHAT SATHIANTHAM IN  
CRIMINAL COURT AND TRYING THE THAMMASAT 18 IN A MILITARY  
COURT APPEARS TO BE THAT BUNCHAT HAS BEEN CHARGED  
SOLELY WITH LESE MAJESTE, A MATTER NORMALLY HANDLED IN  
CRIMINAL COURT. SIX OF THE THAMMASAT 18 ARE CHARGED  
WITH LESE MAJESTE ARISING OUT THE THE SAME INCIDENT  
INVOLVING BUNCHAT. HOWEVER, THESE SIX ARE ALSO  
CHARGED WITH TREASON, COMMUNIST ACTIVITY, ILLEGAL  
POSSESSION OF FIREARMS, MURDER OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS  
(TWO POLICE OFFICERS WERE KILLED AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BANGKO 20065 090955Z

ON OCTOBER 6), INTRUSION, AND INCITING UNREST.  
GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF SEPT. 7 STATES THAT, "SINCE  
MARTIAL LAW IS IN FORCE IN THAILAND AT PRESENT, HEARINGS  
OF THE CASES AGAINST THE 18 DEFENDANTS MUST BE HELD IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACT GOVERNING MILITARY COURTS (1955)"  
WHITEHOUSE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, TRIALS, COURT PROCEEDINGS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 09-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977BANGKO20065  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770327-0075  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** BANGKOK  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t19770983/aaaacrwk.tel  
**Line Count:** 100  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 2b0f2c4a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 77 BANGKOK 19621  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 02-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1339585  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** THE 19TH DEFENDANT  
**TAGS:** SHUM, TH, (BUNCHAT SATHIANTHAM)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/2b0f2c4a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009